

**To:** Attendees

**From:** Ruchi Jain, President

Rhonda Roumani and Alana Dlubak, VP of Events

Katie Yates, VP of Communications

Lani Rosen Gallagher, VP of Programs

Courtney Cheng, VP Membership

Camille Ansley, VP advocacy

Hani Mowafi, Treasurer

Heather Jessen, Secretary

**Meeting Date:** September 13, 2017, 6:00 pm

**Subject:** PTA Meeting

Submitted by: Rhonda Roumani (Covering Heather Jessen for that day)

General PTA Information, Ruchi Jain

- PTA mission, goals and the lack of financial support from the district explained
- PTA needs a lot of parent involvement and we are happy to have a big board (10 members) covering a large range of class-rooms.
- This year PTA plans to invest even more directly in the school.
- PTA will aim to bring more in school and after school enrichment focussing also on Science and Maths in addition to Arts and Music.

Volunteer Recognition, Ruchi Jain

- Alana Dlubak and Rhonda Roumani for the wonderful Kindergarten Playdate.
- Lani Rosen Gallagher and Hani Mowafi working hard on after School Program alongwith Ruchi Jain.

Minutes approval: June 2017 minutes were approved

Courtney Cheng submitted a resignation from the VP Membership position, Approved.

Addition of new positions to the PTA board: Due to the growing after school program, PTA proposes to add a co-VP Program and co-VP Communications position, **Vote Passed.**

Courtney Cheng and Hilary Delaney were nominated from the floor for the co-VP Programs and Communications Position respectively.

Vote to elect Courtney Cheng and Hilary Delaney: Vote Passed.

Hilary Delaney read out loud the results of the financial review, and the committee's findings were adopted.

#### Treasurer's Report, Hani Mowafi

- PTA has a large budget, the year ended up with a surplus.
- New budget for the year will be presented at the next meeting.
- A financial review was conducted by a committee (members are: Hilary Delaney, Neeraj Tiwari, & Debbie). The committee reviewed all prior records and reconciled it all (as required by the Bylaws). No problems were found.
- After School and Language Program is the biggest fundraiser of the PTA.
- Previous Board did a good job in gathering a lot of threads and putting them in organized fashion for compliances as a non profit, we will continue on that.

#### Online Registration, Hani Mowafi

- New Online system for PTA and after school registration has been launched. Apologies for the initial issues but next session should be pretty smooth.
- Online system is going to make money transactions easier, faster and more trackable.
- We will still accept the paper forms, in case people don't want to use online system but we highly recommend to use it.
- Even if you pay by check or cash, we recommend to register your child online to have all the information in one place.

#### Principal's Report, Dr. Evelyn Robles

- Had a great start of the year. Lots of changes in staff so the summer was busy.
- Parents and teachers participated in interviews: Have a new third grade, Spanish, Math and PE teacher. All of them bring a lot of years of experience to the district.
- More time offered to the class teachers for planning/ prepping by increasing the time for essentials to be with the classrooms.
- Extra Arts for third grade, Drama for 5th grade, Music for 2nd grade and advanced Math programs for Upper Grades.
- More professional development opportunities will be offered. One of the trainers from the district came to do some PD sessions with the teachers.
- Going to receive a group of 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> graders to become peer mediators.
- Ms. Tony- used to work with upper grades in terms of conflict resolution and was taking the role of disciplinarian. District is not giving any funds to replace her. So have to take on responsibility that all students are safe and if they have any issues they can work with those issues. Create opportunities for communication.
- No Security Guard, again the school staff has to make sure that all the kids are safe and secure.

#### Talent and Gifted (TAG program) Update, Dr. Evelyn Robles

- TAG is a district program, tests via the reading scores and is for third graders and all the new students in higher grades.
- Pilot program at Hooker of including the whole class in TAG enrichment was started in 2016 and was pretty successful but varied within Grades.

- This year, we have only one TAG teacher- will focus only in the areas of Social Studies (Grades 4-8). TAG teacher will work with classroom teacher to integrate the enrichment with the curriculum.

#### School Planning and Management Report, Dr. Evelyn Robles

- Explained about SPMT. Briefly, it's a group of administrators, teachers and the parents who work together as an advisory group in issues related to school.
- Gillian Eversmann and Rice Nelson are the parent representatives. Ideal to have one or 2 more parents involved.
- Group meets on the first Wednesday of the month at 7:45 a.m.
- SPMT was very instrumental last year in bringing forward the pilot TAG program.
- There is a cut in the school budget for part-time from \$44,000 to \$23,000.
- There are also cuts in regular school budget and thus we are trying to be more creative.
- School will be able to buy one more chromebook cart after lot of phone calls and begging from the district.
- Math assistant position in Upper school is saved.
- Mr. Saleem will be working with 5th, 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade for 15 hours.

#### Cafeteria Policies, Dr. Evelyn Robles

- District policy is to have three items during lunch or breakfast and whatever is not eaten, should be thrown in the trash.
- Our school has a shared basket at the breakfast, non-used food items are left in that basket to be shared with others.
- Also, the kids have been allowed to save the unused items in their backpacks.
- Some parents asked questions about more organic choices and raised concerns about the policies being not informed properly.
- Food is governed by the district, nothing can be changed without their approval.

#### **What's new from the new PTA board**

##### After School and other Programs, Lani-Rosen Gallagher

- We have a new Online registration system for after school and language registrations.
- We are trying to go paperless.
- Afterschool at lower school offers Spanish, Chinese and Tae-kwan- do
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- Hoping to add other programs to Upper school After School Program.
- Parents are welcome to bring in any expertise for a program to After School.
- Upper school garden needs a lot of work, we need parents to form a garden club and the work with classroom teachers to make our garden beautiful. We have partnership with Common Grounds and we are under a schoolyard Habitat program.
- Thanks to Ms. Aiello and Mrs. Prekulaj who are working on garden in Lower school.
- ASP Sub committee has 3-4 parents, one or 2 more will be helpful. It's a lot of work but its all for our kids and is fun.
- Looking for teachers to work in After school program. A parent or a college graduate is also eligible to apply.

- None of the enrichment programs will be mandatory.
- Marie Ackermann, added- there is highest enrollment from Tues-Thurs. Kids have expressed interests in a fencing program.

Events, Alana Dlubak and Rhonda Roumani

- Kindergarten social was well attended.
- Coming Up is Ice Cream Social this Friday (Sept 15) at the little school
- Plan is to add some community events for kids to understand their importance- Coming up is a Walk-a-Thon to help the Hurricane victims (Date TBD)
- Other coming Up events are School picture day in October and the Gala in November.

PTA Membership, Ruchi Jain

- Join PTA, dues are \$10 annually. Of that amount, \$5.50 is sent to the CT PTA in order to keep our membership active.
- We have 80 members already registered as PTA members.
- Our goal is 400 this year.

Questions from the Floor, Attendees

- Has PTA considered using a professional accounting firm to review?

*Hani replied:* There is a template from the state PTA—it was done that way. One of the parents who did it has extensive auditing and financial review experience. Does a lot with corporate compliance. From that standpoint that was done. Planning to transfer all the accounts to Quicken.

*Gillian added:* The tax filing and other IRS related stuff, payroll services is being done by the professionals. Financial Review is more of a CT-PTA requirement to keep us in good standing with them.

- From a Lower School Parent: Concern on the safety in the lower school, no Gate or NO ENTRY sign for entering the playground from Canner street.

*Dr. Robles replied:* District recently did an inspection and have agreed to put more cameras and probably a gate in the lower school. A grant has been submitted by the district and some action should be taken in October.

No more questions from the floor.

**Meeting Adjourned at 7:15 p.m. followed by an Upper School Tour by a group of wonderful 8th Graders.**